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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

DDI-3408-82
23 April 1982MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED]
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for NESA

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SUBJECT: Monthly Warning Meeting - April 1982

1. In the aftermath of the Israeli airstrikes against three PLO military targets in Lebanon and the downing of two Syrian MIG-23s that attempted to engage the Israeli planes, the Community is agreed that Israeli forces remain poised to mount a large-scale ground assault into southern Lebanon. Although the recent strike may have reduced some of the domestic Israeli political pressures to demonstrate continued toughness, tensions remain high on both sides and PLO retaliation is a strong possibility. Should the PLO launch artillery and rocket attacks against northern Israeli settlements, Israel would be likely to undertake a large-scale ground operation designed to:

- drive the PLO north of the Zahrani River, putting their rockets and artillery beyond the range of most of northern Israel; and

- eliminate as much as possible of the PLO's infrastructure.

The Israelis may have decided, however, to resume their earlier practice of taking more frequent, limited pre-emptive actions in retaliation for minor Palestinian incidents, rather than let them accumulate over a period of months without Israeli response. [REDACTED]

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2. The Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai remains on schedule. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The most significant outstanding issue remains that of drawing the border at Taba beach, where an Israeli resort hotel is nearing completion. The Israelis have no legal basis for their claim to the disputed location, but the issue may not be resolved until after the 25 April deadline. Even when resolved, the contentiousness surrounding this and the other 11th hour issues will leave behind a legacy of bitterness that will affect future Egyptian-Israeli relations and prospects for progress in the autonomy talks. [REDACTED]

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3. Recent violence on the West Bank, while at a more serious and sustained level than at any previous time, poses no threat to Israeli control of the area. It is unlikely that West Bankers and Gazans can sustain their opposition to Israeli control: they have no unified program, and their regional, personal, and confessional splits eliminate the kind of cohesion they would require to pose a real threat. We can anticipate more sporadic student/youth-led protests in the West Bank and Gaza as well as expansion of recently initiated efforts by the PLO to infiltrate teams for future, larger-scale action against the Israeli occupation. [REDACTED]

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4. Saddam Hussein, his position weakened by Iraq's dismal performance in its now 19-month long war with Iran, remains a survivor. While we cannot eliminate the possibility of his near-term removal, continued control of Iraq by Saddam Hussein remains more likely. Should the war situation continue to deteriorate (a strong possibility, with another major Iranian campaign in the Ahwaz/Khorramshahr area forthcoming, perhaps as early as next week), Saddam could face a challenge from either a lone assassin or from someone within the Ba'th ruling clique. Less likely, though still possible, are challenges from the lower ranks of the Ba'th and the military. The Community is agreed that a popular uprising is farther down the range of possible scenarios. [REDACTED]

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5. On the question of whether Iranian troops are likely at some time to move across the border into Iraq, there is agreement that such a move will not be logistically feasible before 3-6 months. Beyond that, the State Department representative believes that the Iranians might feel impelled to cross the border when they have the ability to do so. The CIA representative gives more weight to Iranian acceptance of Koranic strictures against aggressive seizure of the territory of other nations and Iran's recognition of the military problems to be faced in such an invasion. [REDACTED]

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6. The recent escalation of fighting between North Yemen and South Yemen-backed insurgent forces raises the possibility that fighting may soon involve the regular forces of both countries. (Heretofore, South Yemen has limited its involvement to support of the NDF insurgents.) A North Yemeni attempt to retake Juban, which was seized by NDF forces, could bring South Yemeni government troops across the border. Those forces probably could then advance beyond Juban (5km from the border), some 12-13 km into North Yemen. The Saudis, who have been equivocal about their support for President Salih, only recently moved more directly into his camp. [REDACTED]

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